

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AGR-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04 TAR-01

TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 OIC-02 IO-11 /099 W
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R 232000Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9991

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, JM

SUBJECT: JAMAICA RICE IMPORT QUOTA

REF: A) 75 STATE 254734, B) 75 STATE 294224,
C) 75 STATE 299454, D) 76 STATE 0104544

1. AMBASSADOR AND ECONOFF CALLED ON MINISTER OF MARKETING AND COMMERCE VIVIAN BLAKE, JANUARY 22, TO DISCUSS RICE ISSUE. MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE EDWARDS ALSO PRESENT. AMBASSADOR REITERATED SAME POINTS OUTLINED REFTELS AND PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED BY AMBASSADOR AND OTHER EMBOFFS WITH BOTH MINISTER AND OTHER OFFICIALS AT MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND FOREIGN TRADE (ITFT). BLAKE STATED IMPORT POLICY DETERMINED BY INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND FOREIGN TRADE, AND HIS MINISTRY SIMPLY ISSUED LICENSES. IN HIS OPINION CRUX OF MATTER WAS WHETHER OR NOT CARICOM AND GATT AGREEMENTS IN CONFLICT AND THIS QUESTION WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE LICENSE COULD BE ISSUED. BLAKE PROMPTLY TELEPHONED P.J. PATTERSON, MINISTER OF ITFT TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS AND ARRANGE FOR MEETING BETWEEN LESLIE WILSON, ITFT UNDER SECRETARY, AND EDWARDS,
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DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE, TO INVESTIGATE PROBLEM AND COME

UP WITH AN ANSWER. BLAKE INDICATED PATTERSON SAID DURING THEIR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION THAT HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO A "TOKEN" IMPORT, BUT BLAKE SAID A QUESTION AROSE AS TO THE SIZE OF THE "TOKEN" WHICH DEPENDED ON THE STRENGTH OF THE U.S. CASE.

2. DURING DISCUSSION EDWARDS EXPRESSED WHAT HE SAID WAS VIEW OF JAMAICAN AMBASSADOR TO U.S. ACCORDING TO AMB. RATTRAY, RICE IMPORT SITUATION NOT IN VIOLATION OF GATT SINCE (1) ONLY ONE COMMODITY INVOLVED RATHER THAN BROAD SPECTRUM OF COMMODITIES AND (2) CARICOM DOMESTIC MARKET, AND THEREFORE NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST U.S. INVOLVED SINCE IT WAS NOT A QUESTION OF ISSUING GLOBAL QUOTAS BUT OF INTERNAL SUPPLY.

3. WILSON PRESENTLY IN GUYANA AND MEETING WITH EDWARDS WILL BE SCHEDULED WHEN HE RETURNS. ECONOFF TO BE ADVISED OF OUTCOME AND WILL FOLLOW UP.

4. COMMENT: BLAKE CLEARLY WISHES TO BE RESPONSIVE. HE UNDERSTANDS PROBLEM, TAKES IT SERIOUS, AND HOPES TO FIND SOLUTION. AT THIS POINT IT LOOKS AS THOUGH AT LAST SOME IMPORTATION OF U.S. RICE MAY BE ALLOWED. GERARD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RICE, IMPORT QUOTAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KINGST00334
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760028-0486
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760128/aaaaaypb.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 254734, 75 STATE 294224, 75 STATE 299454, 75 STATE 104544
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JECT: JAMAICA RICE IMPORT QUOTA
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, JM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006